

ORAL PIERCING

What is an oral piercing

Oral piercings usually consist of a barbell through the tongue or the labret (space between lower lip and chin). Other common oral piercing locations are the lips, uvula, tongue webbing, and cheeks.

What should I know before getting an oral piercing?

- Do not perform piercings on yourself or your friends - this can lead to permanent scarring, infections, or illness.
- Verify that the piercer is a member of a reputable piercing association.
- Check for proper sterilization equipment (an autoclave).
- Make sure needles and gloves are new.
- Purchase your jewelry from your piercer. A reputable piercer will only use jewelry purchased from them.

What problems can an oral piercing cause?

- Fractured teeth are a common problem for people with an oral piercing.
- Damage to the gums
- Problems with oral function such as excessive drooling and increase salivation, problems with speech and chewing and swallowing of food.
- Permanent nerve damage is possible if a nerve is punctured during an oral piercing.

I still want to get an oral piercing, how do I take care of it?

It takes 3-4 weeks for an oral piercing to heal. The piercer will place a larger starter 'barbell' in your tongue to give it enough room to heal when your tongue is swollen. If you decide to keep the piercing after the swelling goes down, it is important that you get a smaller barbell which will be less likely to cause your teeth to be chipped.

Follow these easy steps to help your oral piercing heal:

- Use an antiseptic mouthwash that is alcohol free after every meal and brush the jewelry the same as you would your teeth.
- After the piercing is healed, take it out every night and brush it to remove any plaque.
- Remove the piercing before eating, sleeping or strenuous activity.

BRUSHING TIPS

Always use a soft-bristled toothbrush.

Replace your toothbrush every three months.

Never share a toothbrush, it spreads germs.

How to Brush

- Place the toothbrush against the gum line at a 45-degree angle. Use a small circular motion to brush your teeth and gums.



- Brush back and forth on the chewing surfaces of your teeth holding the brush flat.



- Brush the back of your teeth.



- Brush your tongue! This will freshen your breath and remove germs.

- Brush for at least three minutes, two times a day. Be sure to brush at bedtime to remove bacteria that can cause decay while you are sleeping.

CHECKLIST

Ask to see the piercer's autoclave (sterilizer).

Watch the piercer set up and make sure that the needle is a one time use needle.

Talk with the piercer and get to know them. Some good questions are:

- How long they have been a piercer?
- Where did you learn to be a piercer?
- Can I see your portfolio?

Follow your instinct, if something doesn't feel right, leave.

For more information visit: www.safepiercing.org

FLOSSING TIPS

Flossing cleans between the teeth where a toothbrush can't reach.

Flossing helps control bad breath.

How to Floss

- Wrap about 18 inches of floss around the middle fingers. Gently slide the floss between the teeth (don't snap the floss into the gums).



- As the floss reaches the gum line, make a C-shape around the tooth until you feel pressure against your tooth.



- Gently scrape the tooth surface with the floss.



- Move the floss as it becomes soiled and repeat the process for each tooth.



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